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of a party, daring some other to the deadly strife.—But we feel it would be impossible by any description to give so correct an idea of Donnybrook fair, as the engraving affords. Amidst what is considered by some as mere merriment and mirth—we venture to say there is more misery and madness, devilment and debauchery, than could be found crowded into an equal space of ground in any other part of this, our globe, or in any other part of Ireland during five times the same space which is spent at Donnybrook in one given year; and be it remembered the scenes here described are those which take place during the light of day—the orgies of the night, when every species of dissipation and profligacy is practised without restraint, may be better imagined than described. It may be sufficient to say, that it has been calculated, that during the week of Donnybrook fair there is more loss of female character, and greater spoliation of female virtue among the lower orders, than during all the other portions of the year besides. But as our object at present is more to amuse than to moralize, we shall finish our sketch by presenting our readers with a story, descriptive of the evil effects which too frequently ensue to young females from visiting such places of amusement, even in what they may consider proper company; and as mere lookers on.

JANE FITZCHARLES.

James Fitz-Charles was the descendant of a distinguished and once affluent family; but various circumstances had led to the annihilation of their wealth, and all that his parents could bequeath to him was the name of gentleman and a moderate education.

He had married in early life, and became a widower a few years after. Of several children, one daughter only survived; but he frequently observed that *she* more than compensated him for the loss of all.—He loved her, indeed, with more than a father's fondness, and having been disappointed in all his other expectations of enjoyment, he appeared to cling to this last source of earthly happiness with a fervour of affection which no pen can properly describe.

Jane was in many respects a good girl; but having been so soon deprived of her mother, and her father's attention to the duties of his office preventing that oversight which is necessary for the welfare of young people, and ought to be highly accounted of by those who are favoured to possess it—her education had not been a sufficiently guarded one; she was volatile and thoughtless, and too fond of using to its full extent the liberty with which her father indulged her, and which is so congenial to the vivacity of the youthful imagination.

She was about eighteen years of age, when one of her acquaintances, a young and giddy widow, invited her to accompany her to the fair of Donnybrook. The invitation was cheerfully accepted, and they enjoyed in anticipation the scenes of rustic revelry which they expected to witness, but in which they had no intention of participating. The evening was fine, and after a short time spent in observing the various sports that were going forward, and the beauty of the surrounding scenery, they were joined by two young men, who endeavoured to attract their attention by lively and witty observations on the scene before them. In such a place, and under such circumstances, an acquaintance is easily formed, and the time passed so agreeably in the company of their new friends, that they were easily persuaded to meet them again on the following evening.

It is not our intention to moralize on the various errors which this young woman was induced to commit, but simply to relate the events which occurred, and to let those events speak for themselves. We would only observe, that there is no lesson which it is of more importance to impress upon the minds of young people—and we have no hesitation in saying, of young females in particular—than the impropriety of forming any acquaintance which they are afraid or ashamed of making known to their parents. Had poor Jane been properly instructed in this respect, from what misery and degradation might she not have been preserved.

The elder of the young men paid her particular attention, and on their second interview professed the attach-

ment with which she had inspired him. His name, he said, was Horace Wentworth: he was then pursuing his studies in the college, but was altogether dependant for his future establishment in life on the will of his uncle, a man of great fortune, but of such pride that he thought no woman could be a suitable match for his nephew, who was not in possession of both wealth and title. These reasons, he said, made him desirous that for the present his affection should be only known to herself: by and by he would have completed his studies; he would then enter into orders, and as several rich livings were in the gift of his family, he made no doubt of obtaining one of them; and then how delightful it would be to avow his attachment, retire into the country with *his* Jane and her father, and in peaceful seclusion smile at the folly of those who barter happiness for grandeur, and prefer the ostentation of high life to the enjoyment which mutual affection only can bestow.

It has been often and truly said, that what we wish for we are always willing to believe; and Jane, at least, was no sceptic. She had conceived a warm attachment for her admirer; she believed his professions to be sincere; and she loved to gaze upon the picture of future enjoyment which he exhibited to her imagination. She thought too, that by an union with Horace, her affectionate father would be released from the drudgery to which he was now compelled to submit, and be advanced to his proper station in society—there was ecstasy in the idea; and she was only awakened from her dream of prospective felicity, to find herself a guilty and forsaken creature, and likely soon to become a mother.

We cannot paint the anguish she now experienced—the deep, deep misery into which she was plunged. Often were her hands raised to heaven in frantic supplication, that God in his mercy would be pleased to deprive her of existence, and preserve her father from the shame and sorrow that awaited him. She was conscious that her situation could not be much longer concealed; and although she endeavoured to hide the affliction which preyed upon her, by an affected gaiety, yet the busy whisper had already circulated amongst her acquaintance, who began to regard her with coldness and suspicion. Her father was grieved and perplexed at the change in her behaviour: her favorite geraniums were neglected, her usual avocations were forsaken; and oftentimes, when she appeared to be reading, he would notice the tears falling from her eyes upon the unturned page. At length, however, the direful secret burst upon him. The increased indisposition of his daughter induced him to apply for medical assistance; and a physician being called in, her situation was at once revealed to him. For a moment the unfortunate father appeared petrified with horror, and the only expression which the bitterness of his grief permitted him to use, was one of thankfulness that his wife, at least, was not a partaker in it. With an affected calmness which ill concealed the agitation under which he laboured, he left his once peaceful habitation, as if in the noise and bustle of the streets he could effect an escape from his own feelings. The evening was fast closing in, and he wandered he knew not whither. On the following morning he was discovered by a sentinel at the Pidgeon-house, lying beneath the wall in a state of insensibility. Happily he was well known there, as the duties of his office frequently led him to visit it, and he was immediately conveyed in a coach to his own house.

The illness of her father seemed to recal Jane from the contemplation of her own misery; day and night she attended upon him with the most unwearied assiduity, and for three weeks she was rarely absent from her station at his bed side. During all this time he remained insensible, and the fever had so far weakened him that the physicians who had been called in could hold out no hope of his recovery. At length, however, they announced the approach of returning reason, and the unhappy daughter had again the gratification of hearing her father call upon her. He held her hand, and gazed on her face with more than his usual fondness: “I think,” said he, “I must have been a long time ill, and I have had a sad, sad dream; but surely it was only a dream.”

“Alas! my father,” exclaimed Jane, “would that it were indeed a dream. Can you, can you forgive me?”

“Can I forgive thee my child? I can and do forgive

thee. Yea, as sincerely as I desire that my Father which is in heaven may forgive me my trespasses do I forgive thee thine. May he bless thee, my daughter, and be a father to thee, for I feel that thou wilt soon need one."—These were the last words which he uttered, and in a few hours he was numbered with the dead.

The exertions which Jane had made proved too much for her enfeebled constitution, and before the interment of her father she was attacked with the fever, to which he had fallen a victim. They had only occupied part of a house, and the owner of it, alarmed for his own safety, deemed it the most prudent to have her removed to an hospital. Here she remained some time, and was then removed to another, where she became the mother of a son.

Four months had elapsed from the period of her father's death to the time of her discharge from the hospital, when she again entered upon the busy world, a destitute and friendless creature. She directed her steps towards her former abode, and with a weak and trembling hand ventured to rap at the door; a stranger opened it, and in reply to her enquiry for Mr. and Mrs. —, informed her that they had quitted the house and removed to England; but they had left a letter to be given to Miss Fitz Charles, if that was her name. She received the letter, but had not courage to open it, and with a heavy heart turned away from the door. All day long she wandered about, and sought to rest herself in alleys and obscure corners, for her afflictions bore heavily upon her, and she was worn both in body and mind. Doubtless many of her former friends would have received and sheltered her had she made her situation known to them, but she trembled least any of those should meet and recognize her; for whilst she accused herself of having been the cause of her father's death, she shrank from the idea of that accusation being made by another. The shades of evening had closed in, as she was slowly walking along the bank of the Liffey. A dreadful thought crossed her mind—she stopped and looked around; she thought that she was unobserved, and she fixed a steady gaze upon the water: her forehead seemed burning with heat, but here was that which would cool it—here, at least, the houseless wanderer might repose, and find a certain shelter from want, and sorrow, and disgrace. In a moment her purpose was fixed, and she leaned forward with the intention of executing it. Providence, however, interposed, and prevented the intended suicide, in the very act of its accomplishment. Her infant was sleeping upon her bosom, and when about to take the desperate plunge, she pressed him violently against the wall over which she was going to throw herself—his cry uttered volumes—in a moment the feelings of a mother were raised within her, and she burst into tears—the first which she had shed since the death of her father. At this instant a hand was laid upon her shoulder, and a coarse female voice exclaimed—"You poor silly creature what is it you're thinking about?" Jane made no reply, but turned her face, now bathed in tears, upon the speaker, a poor basket-woman, who had for some time been observing her actions, and had become suspicious of her design. "Come, come," she continued, "don't fret so—there's no sore but there's a cure for it—just tell me where you live now and I'll go home with you."—"Indeed, I cannot—I have no home," was the reply.—"No home," said the inquirer, "musha, honey, but you're in a bad way then; however, don't cry for that at all at all; sure I have a home of my own, and if I cannot go with you to your home you can come with me to mine, and that's all the same you know, barring the difference of it." The affectionate language of the poor woman revived Jane's drooping spirits, and inspired her with confidence. She quietly took her offered arm, and accompanied her to the place she called her home—a poor room, in a mean house, in the outskirts of the city. A better night's rest than she had enjoyed for a long time so far recruited her strength and spirits, that the next morning she was enabled to reflect with more calmness upon her situation. Her first employment was to examine the letter she had received; it contained an account of the money that had been disbursed for her father's funeral expenses, and which had been procured by the sale of the furniture left in their landlord's possession; a small balance was due to her, and this, together with a chest con-

taining her clothes, books, and papers, remained in the house, and would be delivered to any person whom she might commission to receive them. We need scarcely inform our readers that the necessary application was immediately made, and the chest removed to the poor woman's apartment. The money amounted only to a few pounds, but it was sufficient to render their habitation more comfortable, and to afford such an accession to the trading capital of her hostess, and such a consequent increase in her profit, as, she said, more than compensated for the accommodation afforded to her guest; for whom, and for her baby, she felt an increasing attachment.

In arranging her plans for the future, Jane hoped, when her health should be re-established, to be able to maintain herself and her infant, by her skill at her needle; but sorrow and suffering had undermined her constitution, and she was rapidly approaching to the termination of her earthly pilgrimage. She was soon conscious that her dissolution was at hand, and she awaited it in peaceful quietude. She had a broken and contrite spirit, she possessed, also, a firm and undoubting assurance in the all-sufficiency of Him who came "to seek and to save that which was lost." She called upon him and he heard her, and delivered her out of all her troubles: and with her last breath she acknowledged his mercy, and praised him for his loving kindness.

The poor woman was deeply affected at the decease of her guest, and promised to be a mother to her son. She mentioned his destitute situation to some of her customers, and procured amongst them a small subscription to send him to a country nurse, with whom he remained until he was six years old; he then returned to his kind friend in the city, who sold his mother's clothes, which she had hitherto preserved with the most scrupulous care, and was thus enabled to pay for his schooling. Unhappily, however, for him, she died when he was about twelve years of age, and he was left to shift for himself in the best way that he could. We will not follow him into the career of vice into which he was betrayed; it is sufficient to say, that before he had attained his twentieth year, he was committed to prison on a charge of robbery and murder. A gentleman and his servant had been attacked by a desperate gang; they made a powerful resistance, and in the conflict the gentleman received wounds of which he soon after died; they succeeded, however, in securing the person of our hero, if so we may venture to call him, and who was shortly after brought to trial for the offence.

The proceedings against him were conducted by a barrister of distinguished talent, who had lost, in the deceased gentleman, the friend and companion of his earliest youth, and who was thus induced to bring to bear upon the unhappy culprit the whole weight of his eloquence, and to labour for his conviction with all the powers of his mind. The proofs of his guilt were irrefragable, and when called upon for his defence, the judge warned him against attempting by any weak assertions to rebut the incontrovertible evidence that had been given against him. He replied, "My lord, it would be idle for me to persist in the plea which I have made, and to continue to say that I am not guilty of the crime of which I am accused: yet permit me, before the awful fiat be pronounced which shall tell me that my days are numbered, to plead in extenuation of my crimes the circumstances of my situation. My lord, I never knew a mother's affectionate care—I never partook of a father's counsel: abandoned by one parent, and deprived by death of the other, I was early thrown upon the stream of life without a friend and without a guide. I know that I have inflicted a deep injury upon society, yet, oh! be merciful, I beseech you, to my youth and ignorance, and allow me an opportunity, by the rectitude of my future conduct, to make reparation for the crimes which I have committed. I know that my mother was descended from an honorable family, and it is possible, that even in this court the son of a Fitz Charles may not be without relations, who would, for the sake of their common ancestry, unite in the prayer for mercy which he is now offering. And oh, my lord, the publicity which this day's proceedings will give to my unhappy name may even bear it to the author of my mother's death, the man whom I have to curse for my existence, and Horace Wentworth himself be made acquainted

with the state to which his son has been reduced. Death is at all times awful to contemplate, but—

Here the prisoner was interrupted, and the court thrown into confusion, by the interference of the counsellor who had pleaded against him. When the young man stood forward to make his defence, his countenance, and the tone of his voice, impressed his learned antagonist in a manner that he could not account for; but when he pronounced his mother's name, and afterwards that of his father, with the accompanying malediction, his horror and astonishment were indescribable. Had a mine been sprung beneath his feet—had the whole creation gone to wreck around him, and he alone survived, his terror and amazement could not have been greater. He stood up—he extended his arms towards the bench—he struggled for utterance. The court and all within it appeared to him to distend to an amazing size; yet, at the same time, all was pressing upon his brain with the most torturing violence. He gasped with the agony of internal emotion, and it was only by a convulsive effort that he was

able to exclaim, "my lord, my lord judge, acquit the prisoner—he is not guilty of the crime for which he is arraigned. I will prove his innocence, my lord; for I thus publicly avow that I only am the murderer. Aye, my lord, the blood of his mother is upon me—the blood of my friend is upon me—and if he suffers the penalty of the law, his blood also will be upon my head." Here his emotion overcame him; he fainted, and was borne out of the court; the spectators attributing his conduct to sudden illness occasioned by the exertions that he had made.

The judge proceeded to pass the awful sentence of the law, and in due time it was carried into effect. Some weeks elapsed before the counsellor recovered from the frenzy which had seized him—his first enquiry was after the unfortunate prisoner; he heard his fate with apparent indifference, but his insanity returned the same evening, and in despite of all the efforts of medicine, he sank into a state of melancholy madness, and ended his days in an asylum for lunatics.



LORD KILWARDEN.



LORD CORNWALLIS.



JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN.



ROBERT EMMETT.

We have copied the above sketches from a very extraordinary work recently published in Paris, by the famous Sir Jonah Barrington. As the characters of all the individuals must be known to the generality of our readers, we shall for the present content ourselves with extracting the following description which Sir Jonah has given of our talented though eccentric countryman, John Philpot Curran

"John Philpot Curran, a person of humble origin, of careless habits, and contemptible exterior, rose at once to give new lustre and spirit to an already highly enlightened and spirited profession. He had passed through the University of Dublin unsignalized by any very peculiar honours; and was admitted to the Irish bar, scarcely known, and totally unpatronized. With the higher orders he had no intercourse; and had contracted manners, and adopted a kind of society, tending rather to disqua-

by him for advancement : but whatever disadvantages he suffered from humble birth, were soon lost sight of amidst the brilliancy of his talent ; and a comparison of what he had been, with what he rose to, rendered the attainments of his genius the more justly celebrated. Never did eloquence appear in so many luminous forms, or so many affecting modulations, as in that gifted personage. Every quality which could form a popular orator was in him combined ; and it seemed as if nature had stolen some splendid attribute from all former declaimers to deck out and embellish her adopted favourite. On ordinary occasions, his language was copious, frequently eloquent, yet generally unequal ; but, on great ones, the variety of his elocution, its luxuriance, its effect, were quite unrivalled ;—solemn, ludicrous—dramatic, argumentative—humorous—sublime ; in irony, invincible ; in pathos, overwhelming ; in the alternations of bitter invective and of splendid eulogy, totally unparalleled : wit relieved the monotony of narrative, and classic imagery elevated the rank of forensic declamation. The wise, the weak, the vulgar, the elevated, the ignorant, the learned, heard and were affected—he had language for them all. He commanded, alternately, the tear or the laugh ; and at all times acquired a despotic ascendancy over the most varied auditory.

These were the endowments of early Curran, and these were the qualities which, united to an extraordinary professional versatility, enabled him to shoot like a meteor beyond the sphere of all his contemporaries.

In private and convivial society, many of his public qualities accompanied him in their fullest vigour. His wit was infinite and indefatigable. A dramatic eye anticipated the flights of an unbounded fancy—but the flashes of his wit never wounded the feelings of his society ; except, perhaps, those minds of contracted jealousy, which shrink up from the reluctant consciousness of inferiority. He was, however, at times, very unequal. As in a great metropolis (to use one of his own illustrations), “ the palace and the hovel—splendour and squalidness—magnificence and misery, are seen grouped and contrasting within the same precincts ;” there were occasions when his wit sunk into ribaldry, his sublimity degenerated to grossness, and his eloquence to vulgarity ; yet his strength was evident in his weakness. Hercules, spinning as a concubine, still was Hercules ; and, probably, had Curran been devoid of these singular contrarieties, he might have glided into a brilliant sameness ; and, like his great contemporary, Burgh, though a more admired man, he would probably have been a less celebrated personage.

The innumerable difficulties he had to encounter in early life, were not easy to conquer ; but once conquered, they added an impetus to his progress. His ordinary, mean, and trifling person ; his culpable negligence of dress, and all those disadvantageous attributes of early indigence, were imperceptible or forgotten amidst his talents, which seldom failed to gain a decided victory over the prejudices even of those who were predetermined to condemn him.

His political life was unvaried : from the moment he became a member of the Irish parliament his temperature never changed. He pursued the same course, founded on the same principles. He had closely connected himself in party, and friendship with Mr. George Ponsonby ; but he more than equalled that gentleman in the sincerity of his politics. From the commencement to the conclusion of his public life, he was the invariable advocate of the Irish people ; he never more deserted their interest, or abandoned their defence. He started from obscurity with the love of Ireland in his heart ; and while that heart beat, it was his ruling passion.

As a mere lawyer, he was in no estimation ; but, as an able advocate, he had no rival ; and, in his skill and powers of interrogation, he vastly excelled all his rivals. He never failed to uphold the rights and independence of the Irish bar, on every occasion where its privileges were trenchanted upon ; and the Bench trembled before him when it merited his animadversions. None ever assailed him publicly, who was not overthrown in the contest ; and even the haughty arrogance of Fitzgibbon seldom hazarded an attack, being certain of discomfiture.

Mr. Curran was appointed Master of the Rolls (Mr.

Ponsonby then Lord Chancellor). He was disappointed in not obtaining a legal situation more adapted to his description of talents. He was also chagrined at not having obtained a seat in the imperial parliament, and at length resigned his office, upon a pension of £2,700 per annum. He died at Brompton, on the 14th of October, 1817, after a short illness, and now “ not a stone tells where he lies.” His funeral was private, and he was buried in the yard of Paddington Church. The author knew him well. He had too much talent to last—every thing is worn out by incessant action. He was never fond of show, and in latter days he sought and obtained obscurity. Of the close of his life I have heard much, and credit little.

The kindness of a correspondent enables us to add the following particulars relative to this extraordinary individual :—

John Philpot Curran was born the 24th of July, 1750, at Newmarket, an obscure town in the county of Cork, in Ireland. The lowness of his origin has been exaggerated. His father, James Curran, who has been represented as an unlettered peasant, was seneschal of a manor court at Newmarket ; and it is confidently asserted by those who knew him, that he possessed a mind and acquirements above his station in life. He was familiar with the Greek and Roman classics, which he often cited in conversation. He delighted in disputation, and after his son's return from college, the old man was frequently to be found in ardent contention with him upon the metaphysical doctrines of Locke. His mother, whose maiden name was Philpot, belonged to a family well known and respected, and the descendants of which still continue in the class of gentry. She was a woman of strong original understanding, and of admitted superiority in the circles where she moved.

John Philpot (the eldest of four boys and a girl, all of whom he outlived) was received into the house of the Rev. Nathaniel Boyce, the resident clergyman at Newmarket, who was pleased with the boy, and gave him personal tuition in the rudiments of classics. His rapid progress determined his parents to give him a learned education ; and he was put to the free school at Middleton, from which he entered Trinity College, as a sizer.—In 1769 he obtained a scholarship, and commenced reading for a fellowship ; but deterred by labour, or diverted by accident, he soon gave it up. He was intended for the church, but he preferred the bar. He completed his studies in 1770, when he passed over to London, where he became a student of law in the Middle Temple. He made trial of his eloquence at a debating society ; the first attempt disheartened him—but his second was successful, and made him acquainted with his own powers. In the second year he married a daughter of a Dr. Creagh, who was from the same county as himself.

He was called to the Irish bar in Michaelmas 1775, and was soon noticed and extensively employed. His first brief was in the Court of Chancery ; he had only to read a short sentence from his instructions, but he performed it so precipitately and inaudibly, that the Chancellor, Lord Lifford, requested him to repeat the words, and raise his voice, upon which his agitation became extreme, he became unable to utter a syllable, the *brief dropped from his hand*, and a friend who sat beside him was obliged to take it up and read the necessary passage. However, his diffidence totally vanished in a short time. In 1779 he became a member of “ the Monks of the Order of St. Patrick,” founded in that year by Lord Avonmore. In 1783 he became a member of the Irish House of Commons. In 1787 he visited France, and subsequently Holland. From the year 1794 till he was made Master of the Rolls, he was constantly employed in defending the unfortunate men who were acting against the government. He was engaged for the Sheares, Hamilton Rowan, Rev. W. Jackson, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Robert Emmett, and others too numerous to be mentioned here ; in which he displayed that eloquence that rendered him so famous. His speeches in the parliament were not half so much admired as those at the bar. In 1806 he was appointed Master of the Rolls, and a mem-

ber of the privy council. After this he visited Scotland.—He was solicited to stand candidate for the borough of Newry, but after six days' polling he gave it up, finding that General Needham, the opposing candidate, was more popular. In 1813 his health began to decline, and while in London, in the April of that year, he suffered severely from an attack of inflammation in his chest, but in a little time so far recovered as to resume his judicial duties. In 1814, his health still declining, he resigned his judicial station, and then visited England and France. The short remainder of his life was passed between Dublin and London. On the day of his last departure for England, after having parted in the ordinary way from one of his friends, he suddenly turned back and grasped his hands, saying in an affectionate but firm tone, "you will never behold me more." Before he arrived at Cheltenham he was attacked with paralytic symptoms—he arrived in London in September, intending to visit France or Italy. On the 7th of October a swelling appeared over one of his eyes, to which, thinking it proceeded from cold, he gave little attention. On the night of the 8th, he was attacked with apoplexy. He was attended by Drs. Bradham and Ainslie, and Mr. Tegart of Pall Mall, all of whom pronounced recovery impossible—all their skilful efforts were in vain. He expired at nine o'clock at night, on the 14th October, 1817, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. During his short illness he appeared free from pain; was speechless from the commencement of the attack, and with the exception of a few intervals, quite insensible. His last moments were so placid, that those who watched him could not ascertain the exact moment of his expiration. Three of his children, his son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and his old and attached friend, Mr. Godwin, (the novelist) surrounded his death bed, and performed the last offices of piety and respect. The funeral did not take place till the fourth of November, and his remains were privately interred in one of the vaults of Paddington Church, London.

W. A.

Curran has left some pieces in poetry and prose behind him. Poetry he only practised in his leisure hours as a relaxation from the toils of the day; nevertheless he produced some effusions not unworthy of the greatest poets of the age. Very few of his poems remain. The following shows how the author could appreciate true domestic happiness:—

THE GREEN SPOT THAT BLOOMS O'ER THE DESERT OF LIFE.

A SONG.

O'er the desert of life, where you vainly pursued
Those phantoms of hope which their promise disown,
Have you e'er met some spirit divinely endued,
That so kindly could say, "you don't suffer alone!"
And however your fate may have smiled or have frowned,
Will she deign still to share as the friend and the wife?
Then make her the pulse of your heart; for you've found
"The green spot that blooms o'er the desert of life."

Does she love to recal the past moments so dear,
When the sweet pledge of faith was confidently given
When the lip spoke the voice of affection sincere,
And the vow was exchanged, and recorded in heaven?
Does she wish to re-bind what already was bound,
And draw closer the claim of the friend and the wife?
Then make her the pulse of your heart; for you've found
"The green spot that blooms o'er the desert of life."

A TRULY BRAVE MAN.

When the American army was at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777, a Captain of the Virginia Line refused a challenge sent him by a brother officer, alleging that his life was devoted to the service of his country, and that he did not think it a point of duty to risk it, to gratify the caprice of any man. His antagonist gave him the character of a coward through the whole army. Conscious of not having merited the aspersion, and discovering the injury he should sustain in the minds of those unacquainted

with him, he repaired one evening to a general meeting of the officers of that line. On his entrance, he was avoided by the company, and the officer who had challenged him insolently ordered him to leave the room—a request which was loudly re-echoed from all parts. He refused, and asserted that he came there to vindicate his fame; and after mentioning the reasons which induced him not to accept the challenge, he applied a large hand grenade to the candle, and when the fuse had caught fire, threw it on the floor, saying, "here gentlemen, this will quickly determine which of us all dare brave dangers most." At first, they stared upon him for a moment with stupid astonishment, but their eyes soon fell upon the fuse of the grenade, which was fast burning down. Away scampered colonel, general, ensign, and captain, and all made a rush at the door simultaneous and confused.—Some fell, and others made way over the bodies of their comrades; some succeeded in getting out, but for the instant there was a general heap of flesh sprawling at the entrance of the apartment. Here was a colonel jostling with a subaltern, and there fat generals pressing lean lieutenants into the boards, and blustering majors and squeaking ensigns wrestling for exit; the size of the one and the feebleness of the other making their chance of departure pretty equal, until time, which does all things, at last cleared the room, and left the noble captain standing over the grenade with his arms folded and his countenance expressing every kind of scorn and contempt for the train of scrambling red-coats, as they toiled and bustled and bored their way out of the door. After the explosion had taken place, some of them ventured to return, to take a peep at the mangled remains of their comrade, whom, however, they found alive and uninjured.—When they were all gone, the captain threw himself flat on the floor as the only possible means of escape, and fortunately came off with a whole skin and repaired reputation.

ASTRONOMY—THEORY OF THE EARTH.

Professor Brande, in his excellent "Manual of Chemistry," notices the amusing theory of the earth as given by Buffon in his *Historie et Theorie de la Terre et des Epogues de la Nature*. He says it merits attention not on account of its accordance with present appearances, or as affording plausible solutions of observed phenomena, but from the eloquence with which it is adorned, the extent of the information it displays, and the popularity derived from these sources.

He supposes the planets in general to have been struck off from the sun by a comet; that they consisted of fluid matter, and thence assumed a spherical form; and that by the union of centrifugal and centripetal forces they are restrained in their present orbits. The earth gradually cooled, and the circumambient vapours condensed upon its surface, while sulphurous, saline, and other matters, penetrated its cracks and fissures, and formed veins of metallic and mineral products. The scorified or pumice like surface of the earth, acted upon by water, produced clay, mud, and loose soils, and the atmosphere was constituted of subtle effluvia, floating above all the more ponderous materials. The sun, and winds, and tides, and the earth's motion, and other causes, became effective in producing new changes. The waters were much elevated in the equatorial regions: and mud, gravel, and fragments were transported thither from the pole: hence, says the speculator, the highest mountains lie between the tropics, the lowest towards the poles; and hence the infinity of islands which stud the tropical seas. The globe's surface, once even and regular, became now rough and irregular; excavations were formed in one part, and land was elevated in another; and during a period of ages, the fragments of the original materials, the shells of various fish, and different other exuviae, were ground up by the ocean, and produced calcareous strata, and other low-land depositions.

This, certainly, is doing business with a flourish of trumpets, and would seem to exhibit rather the poetic splendour of philosophy, than its dry details and deeply hidden truth,